Teesta Project Stage-V

†2858. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems faced by the local tribal community from Teesta Project Stage-V;

(b) whether it is a fact that local tribals, especially the lepcha community, is facing problems from the project;

(c) whether Government are taking any concrete steps for development oriented work in Sikkim and other States of North Eastern Region, to maintain geographical balance, ensuring safety of the public; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) to (d) NHPC have informed that the locals residing in the vicinity of Teesta-V HE Project had complained regarding development of cracks in their houses etc. due to impact of Project construction. NHPC have also informed that compensation as assessed and intimated by the Government of Sikkim amounting to Rs. 1.06 Crores has been deposited with the District Collector (East), Government of Sikkim for disbursement to the affected.

Representation have also been received from the leaders of lepcha community and others highlighting protests by local people against hydro power projects being constructed on the Teesta river in Sikkim in view of the environmental aspects. To address such issues, a study titled 'Carrying Capacity Study of Teesta basin in Sikkim' was awarded by Ministry of Environment and Forest to the Centre for inter-disciplinary Study of Mountain and Hill Environment (CISMHE). The study covers details of the Land Environment, Faunal Aspects, Socio-Economic and Socio-Cultural Aspects etc. of Hydro Projects on Teesta River in Sikkim.

Moreover to address the problem of economic backwardness of the North East Region (NER) the Government of India have initiated various special measures for the development of North Eastern Region including Sikkim. All the Central Government Ministries, except for those exempted, are required to make a provision, of, and spend at least 10% of their Plan budget for the North Eastern States, with a view to accelerating development process in the Region. The unspent balance out of this mandatory provision 10% does not lapse and is credited to a notional pool called Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR), which is used for creating infrastructure through various socio -economic development projects in the NER. Secondly, the North Eastern States, including Sikkim, are covered under the special category States under which their Annual Plans are funded on the basis of 09:10 (grant:loan). Besides, the Border Area Development Program (BADP), the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) and the North Eastern Council (NEC) also fund or implement development projects in the Region.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.